

~~Since I have been helping at the Maritime Museum~~ I have been remembering about my many trips to Santa Cruz Island. My first trip was in August of 1926 before my fifth birthday. We drove to Stearn's Wharf early in the morning and boarded Capt. Ira Eaton's "Sea Wolf" about 6 a.m. I suppose. The landing was near where the Harbor Restaurant is now. The breakwater had not been built yet so getting aboard the moving boat was quite a trick. Dad told Mother to sit on the deck behind the small forward cabin with Margaret and me, which would give us some shelter from the wind and the spray. After what seemed a very long time we reached Santa Cruz Island. (It was probably about 3 or 4 hours)

Our party, consisting of perhaps 15 people total, was landed by skiff and our provisions and gear likewise put ashore. The campsite was about 75 yards up the canyon where there were a number of tall oak trees beside the small stream there. Everyone began carrying food and camping gear up there. I wanted to help so they gave me the axe, which I dragged up as I was too small to carry it. I remember that our whole family made their bed on one canvas. We used blankets not sleeping bags. I don't remember sleeping bags until later. I do not remember much about the actual camping activity since I was so young.

We had a round-bottomed row boat belonging to Nelson Smith, Jake Hales, Joe ~~Switzer~~^{Schultz} and Manny Solari. ~~We must have towed it over behind the "Sea Wolf".~~

I remember going out fishing in it several times. It had a outboard motor which was started by spinning the flywheel using a knob on the fly wheel. We trolled for mackerel and bonita using heavy hand lines and jigs made of bone. You had to be careful to keep the wet lines from touching a spark plug or you would get a painful shock. Dad also took me fishing from the shore in the little cove just west of Dicks. We caught sheepshead using mussels for bait. Sometimes he would let me reel in the fish

while he held the rod. I still have one of these old reels, which were like a large spool with knobs for handles. I really liked catching fish at this early age. The men in the group went over to the rocks east of the harbor to get abalones at least once during our stay. I liked the abalone to eat but not the fish. There were several teenage boys along, Spaulding Birss, Whitelaw Birss, and Chesley Pinkham, who all had guns along and did a lot of shooting. Dad and his good friend, Roy Pinkham tried soaking some of their ammunition in water to reduce the amount of shooting.

On our second trip in 1927 Capt. Eaton did not come to get us on the agreed day. Mother was teaching second grade at Carpinteria Grammar School and Margaret was to start first grade so they had to get home. We all went west to Fry's where rock was being quarried for the SB Breakwater to see if Mother and Margaret could ride to Santa Barbara on a tug pulling a rock barge. The skipper of the Merret, Chapman Scott Co tug was reluctant to take them but finally agreed to, perhaps a few bucks changed hands, I remember Dad persuading me to stay with him so we could fish some more. We were fishing for sheephead at our favorite spot, when we saw the tug with the barge clear Fry's. I was a little sad to see them headed home. Their ride home was not fun as they it was windy and rough. It took a long five hours closed in the pilothouse high above the deck. They arrived after dark and were shuttled over to the Wharf by skiff, that trip was the only time Mother was ever seasick.

In due course Capt. Eaton came in the "Sea Wolf" to haul us home but two other times he delayed coming for us for several days. We were camped at Dicks another time and he was 4 or 5 days late so we loaded all six of us and our gear in the Smith-Hales boat, with the outboard power and set off for Pelican Bay where Eatons had their fishing camp. We were deeply loaded with only a few inches of freeboard but the ocean was glassy smooth. However when we were half way to Mussel Rock Max

Fleishman's "Haida" passed by about a half mile offshore raising quite a large wake. I still have a mental picture of the waves of the wake approaching. I thought what could I do, I couldn't swim. Needless to say we rode right over them and went on down the Island to Pelican. The "Sea Wolf" arrived a couple of hours later so we finally arrived at SB Harbor.

Another summer Eaton hauled us over to camp at Ladies Harbor. He was late again by several days. We usually fished West along the Island in the mornings trolling for kelp bass, bonita, mackrel and baracuda. We passed by Valdez Harbor where two artists were camping. They were fishing from the rocky shore and they hailed us asking if we knew the whereabouts of Eaton. They had been left several days beyond their agreed departure day and were nearly out of food. In fact all they had been eating for two days was what fish they could catch with cocoa to drink. Dad and Roy Pinkham told them to come on down to Ladies in their rowboat. We cooked them a good meal as Dad and Roy always took extra food along. The next day we motored down to Pelican to find Eaton. Luckily he was there so we went aboard and returned to pick up the two artists and all of our gear and theirs and so returned to SB.

At this time Eaton was depending on fishermen to do his transporting which probably made it more erratic. I remember a fisherman by the name of Joe Burmudes hauled us once. Several days later we were trolling for bonita off of Arch Rock and Joe came by and stopped to talk. He had made a trip over from SB to haul the Bliss family of Carpinteria around the whole island. The Blisses were camped at Valdez at the time. When he arrived the many family members could not decide what they wanted to do so ended up canceling the trip around the island, which they had to pay for anyway. Joe asked us if we had caught any fish, which we hadn't so he wondered if we would like to go with him to fish for bottom fish on a reef which was about 3 miles off of the island

between Pelican and Orizaba. We helped him catch several boxes of rock cod as they were called. They would only bring a few cents a pound from the fish buyer but he made several dollars extra which was pretty good during the middle of the depression and we had 2 or 3 nice ones for dinner.

After this time Dad and Roy hired "Steve" Orwin Stevens of Summerland to take us over. He took us to Ladies and left us. We were expecting Lucien Higgins of Carpinteria to join us any day. He was finishing a boat in his ranch shop and was coming any day. Each day when we were out fishing we would look for him and ask the rare boat the came by if they had seen him. Finally after nearly a week he showed up. He had burned out a bearing on the way over and limped into the harbor. The next day he took the model T Ford engine apart in the boat and we went down to Fry's Harbor in our skiff and outboard where Lucien borrowed a blow torch, ladle and some bobbitt metal from the caretaker at the quarry. Lucien proceeded to pour a new bearing and reassembled the engine all in the boat. It not only got him back home but he used the engine with that bearing for several years.

Another time Steve was to haul us to the Islands and we were loading our gear at the long Oil Pier in Summerland where he anchored his boat. We were loading in the afternoon so we could get away early the next morning. There was a pretty good swell running and as Roy went to step onto Steve's deck with his outboard engine the boat surged away from the landing platform. Roy went down into the ocean still holding the engine until he reached bottom and had to let go. Steve grappled for it and after 20 minutes or so caught ahold and pulled it up. Roy took the engine home, took it all apart and warmed the coil in the oven, and put it together later. In the morning early we set off for Santa Cruz. We arrived at Ladies and set up camp and then tried the engine. It wouldn't run: no spark. Steve hauled us down to the quarry at Fry's. Believe it or not the caretaker had some

extra outboard parts including a magneto coil that would fit and he got the engine to run. I remember Dad gave the man \$20 which was about a week's wages during the Depression and when I questioned Dad about it he replied, "It wouldn't be much of a trip without an outboard."

Another trip with Steve was when Dad helped with the Carpinteria Girl Mariners. This was an organization started by Fan Wymond about 1931. Mother was 1st Mate so Dad got roped in to help. Steve hauled Dad, Roy, Frank Wymond, Frank Jr., James Hendy, and me over early to set up camp. The next day, Fan, Mother and Ina Latham (2nd Mate) and about 15 high school girls came over on the "Navigator," a large sail boat belonging to the De Mott family of SB. The girls were kept busy by Fan Wymond rowing, swimming, hiking, and working on badges. Frank Jr. (called Favie,) James, and I did our usual fishing, boating, hiking, and rolling rocks into the canyons. One day we three started hiking up the west side of Ladies. We got up on top of the large mesa overlooking Arch Rock where we saw several kestrels fighting a territorial battle. They would fly up very high and then dive on one another. We found one dead, but still warm, which had been killed. I never saw this ~~again~~ *kestrels fighting again* in my lifetime.

We hiked about half way to the top of the island where we had a difference of opinion about our route. Favie wanted to go to the top of Mount Diablo, the highest peak, but James and I wanted to go back to camp. So he sent off and we headed back. We ended up going down a canyon, which reaches the ocean west of Arch Rock. After a hard scramble we got on a small beach under the high cliff just to the right of this canyon. In amongst some large rocks we found an old fashioned boat engine like the Spray had, a 2 or 3 cylinder Frisco Standard.

Later Dad told me people thought it had been in Frank Nidever's boat which was lost at the time he disappeared. Since then I have found out Nidever's boat was probably sunk by a

steamer in the channel. Incidentally, two other fishermen were lost looking for him, Big Jerry and Ike Nento (?) mentioned in Mrs. Eaton's diary, Dad went with the party that looked for them. Dad was a friend of Jack Ross, son of Jim Ross. The sheriff who was leading the search. You can see your grandfather was always anxious to "go to the Islands." They found Big Jerry's body and (?) in Potato Bay. That cured your grandfather of ever wanting to go on a manhunt again.

However to get back to the hike, we finally worked our way up to the high mesa back of Arch Rock. In crossing this large flat mesa, James and I saw a huge wild pig asleep and there were no trees in case it took after us. We made a long detour and when we got downwind we realized it had been dead for a long time. We went over to investigate and found a very large boar. The hunter had taken the tusks, which disappointed us quite a bit.

We continued on to camp and arrived very tired out. Where was Favie? We said that he had left us but Fan Wymond said we had left him and that should never be done. We were convinced that the majority ruled but in the Wymond household Mrs. Wymond ruled. She was very upset and proposed to go look for him. He however showed up shortly after in one piece so the ruckus blew over.

The rest of the time we three boys had fun doing our usual things, swimming, rowing, fishing, rolling rocks down the hills and skipping rocks on the smooth water in the harbor. Another fun pastime was to throw rocks at the condensed milk cans found on the beach. It was necessary to punch 2 holes in them to get the milk out so they made great targets. After a few hits or very near misses they would fill with water and sink. There was almost always another because with no refrigeration condensed milk was greatly used.

After dinner there was a campfire for all to gather round. Roy Pinkham played his accordion and we all sang and talked.

After it got good and dark Frank Wymond Sr. would tell ghost stories. They were particularly scary as I remember. The girls had to climb up to a large cave on the west side of the canyon where they had chosen to sleep. The rest of us slept in the willows and under the oaks near the stream. The frogs would croak all night and there was quite a bit of ^{other} night noise from mice and sometimes foxes. The stories and noised ^A made it a little scary. A day or two before we were to go home some Santa Barbara Sea Scouts who were camped at Valdez came to visit. They must have been short of food because the morning we were to leave arrangements were made for them to come back and have breakfast with us. Dad had a large griddle from a big gas stove which he used to fry bacon and eggs for 35 people that morning.

After breakfast we all packed up to go back to SB, the Sea Scouts in their 2 boats and the rest of us with Steve.

Another summer Steve took us over to camp at Valdez and as fishing was slow he stayed with us. One day we all rode on his boat to the West end. We fished along and caught all the kelp bass we needed. When we reached Frazer Cove, Dad asked him to put himself, me, and one other person ashore so we could walk back to Valdez. We walked up to the highest point on the cliff overlooking the West end. We next walked along the cliff peering over occasionally like at Painted Cave. It was a hard hike as many of the places that look like gullies from a boat are pretty large canyons on top of the cliffs. We finally reached Hazards where we had left a skiff and were able to row the rest of the way to camp.

From this time on we usually camped at Valdez where we had many fun times and some interesting experiences such as one occasion when mackerel cornered a large school of anchovies in against the shore. The waves would carry them up the beach where the water would sink through the rocks and gravel and

leave the anchovies stranded. Dad gathered up quite a bunch of them and fried some up for dinner. A young boy who had come over with May Young on his boat was enjoying them when he noticed one of his hadn't been cleaned and Dad said Did you find one not cleaned? He pretended to be surprised but actually none were cleaned as was also true of canned sardines. It was this same trip that John Young found a sick cormorant on the beach and picked it up. The bird struck his cheek with its beak narrowly missing his eye.

Valdez camp was quite a nice one. We had a camp table where the east edge of the canyon ends above the flat area. The creek flowed that far. We slept on up the canyon a way under the oaks on the east side. All of the canyons have changed a lot due to the erosion and floods since 1937 when we no longer could camp at Santa Cruz. Yellow jackets were usually quite a problem particularly at Valdez. We always included canned fruit in our larder and would leave an inch or so of the syrup in the bottom of the can to make a yellow jacket trap. They loved the syrup and would get it on their wings, which prevented their flying. After a few days the number of them was noticeably less.

One windy afternoon at Valdez we all went for a hike to roll rocks on the ridge to the east. We had rolled several pretty large rocks down into the canyon enjoying watching them leap and bound down the steep canyon sides. We located a huge rock, which looked as though we might start it down the hill. We shoved and pushed, moving it just a little. Finally we laid on our backs and put our feet against it. Success! We raised it up as a swarm of yellow jackets came out of their nest under the rock. They chased us down the hill. Most of us got off with one or two stings but poor Roy Pinkham who was in the middle was nailed several times. It was very painful.

Another windy afternoon several of us were lying on the beach at Valdez telling stories and joking. We had a heavy

redwood skiff pulled way up from the water's edge. A particularly strong gust of wind swirled in and tipped the boat up on its side. I have heard it claimed that on rare occasions a gust can tip an empty skiff over in the water however I have never seen that.

Occasionally we would go over to Santa Cruz at Spring Vacation. Once we were camped at Valdez with friends of Dad's including several teachers when it rained so we set up camp in the mouth of the cave that opens onto the beach. We were pretty well sheltered from the rain but we had to carry our camp water quite a way. We used square five gallons cans with the tops removed to haul the water. These cans were quite common in those days as containers for bulk cooking oil, kerosene and such. There was a fisherman's cabin at our time at Valdez. One Spring Mother, Dad, and I slept in it to get out of the cold. I remember there were many used large dry cell batteries lying around. The fisherman had obviously used them for a battery-powered radio. The radios in those days used quite a bit of electricity so it must have been quite an expense during the depression.

The shack at Valdez was then torn down after just a few years. One at Dicks lasted much longer. It was used by Old Ben Farneau until he died there in the Thirties. Another one existed for quite a long time at Choches Harbor on the south side. We stopped there with the Catlins to spend the night in 1936. Jalmar Englund and his wife were living there while he fished for crawfish (spiny lobsters). He set and pulled 80 traps using a skiff, which he rowed. Besides he had to catch enough fish to bait the traps each day. He was a busy man indeed.

We camped behind their cabin along the stream, which flowed that far. A little above our camp was the prettiest corn patch you would want to see and they told us they didn't have a worm in any ear. Then we realized why they had only been moderately happy with the gift of sweet corn we brought ashore

from the boat. And I will bet they had worms the next year. We only stayed there one night and continued on around the Island past Forney's cove and the West end. About half way between the West end and Painted Cave we noticed a sheep trapped in a cave high on the cliff. We had noticed it before on a trip earlier during Spring vacation. It had jumped down into this place and had not gotten out in five months that had passed. Any bit of grass had long since been eaten and as there appeared to be no water to drink so Dad shot it,--poor thing.

We did not shoot sheep otherwise although we usually took a .22 along. We shot at seagulls and cormorants on the fly. They were safe as we were usually shooting from a rocking small boat at a moving target. John Young did claim that he hit a flying fish once. I didn't see that so can't vouch for that. We shot at ravens also as they were considered pests. At camp we shot at targets. A favorite mark was condensed milk cans bobbing in the harbor. The pigs on the island were considered fair game but at the time we camped there they were very wild and difficult to stalk. The Caire's ranch hands tried to control the numbers of pigs.

Another thing we used to occasionally do while we were camped over there was to spear rays under the cliff east of Dicks. We would look for them lying on the sandy bottom partially covered with sand. We usually tried it early in the morning before there was a riffle on the water so they were easier to see. We used long handled spears so the water had to be less than 12 feet deep. These large rays would pull a heavy skiff along quite rapidly. The 5 tined spears would pull out quite easily at first. After commercial sword fishing gear became common we used a long handle with a detachable dart and a line attached which would go through the ray and turn sideways. These didn't pull out so we would get quite a fast ride for 100 yards or so. Another sandy bottom where we would occasionally spear rays was at Hazards Harbor. Incidentally Pelican Harbor

(not Bay) is another place where rays gather in large numbers. Mrs. Rock told me that this was also true when they used to go over there in the 20's.

After Ed Stanton bought Santa Cruz in 1937 we could no longer camp there so we only visited it once or twice on a chartered boat we could sleep on. Dad got out of debt in 1937 because of the 1937 Freeze. By some atmospheric quirk the lemons at the "Homestead" were mostly spared and they paid enough to pay off the loan he had taken out to buy the 22 acres west of the cemetery. After the war started in Europe farming became a little more profitable so he started to look for a boat of his own. In the spring of 1941 he purchased the "Spray" from a building contractor in Santa Barbara by the name of Andrew McDonough. It was a converted fishing boat, originally the Leonardo Di Vinci. We made several trips to Santa Cruz the summer of '41 then came the war and pleasure boating ceased. After the War we started going to SC again, staying on the boat. We would sneak ashore and walk around but never hike far. Our activities were boat oriented - fishing and riding along the Island to see the sights. The fishing was good as you children probably remember. The kelp was thick along the shore and we caught large kelp bass trolling. Further out large bonita were usually available. They were a lot more fun to catch but not as tasty. As we would fish along the island we would look for the eagle nests high on the cliffs. There were quite a few particularly between Frys Harbor and the West end. It was also fun to look for sheep, sometimes on very steep cliffs.

We usually anchored for the night at Pelican Bay. There were very few boats as a rule with probably as many fishing boats as pleasure boats. This was before the advent of fiberglass boats. Dad sold the Spray about the time production fiberglass boats were starting to become more common in the middle 1960's. The reason he got rid of it was because it needed more care all

the time and farming was taking more of our time. The return from farming was not much and at that time it had to be moved into a slip at more rent.

On one of the first trips to SC Mother, Pop, Margaret and I were anchored at Pelican Bay when the birds started working on a school of bait fish at the west point of the bay. Margaret and I went out in the 8 foot punt Dad had inherited from the Mariners. I rowed and Margaret tended a handline with a feather jig. We caught 3 or 4 large kelp bass which were feeding on the bait. The bass came right up to the surface and we watched a pair of eagles catch two or three. This is the only time I ever saw this over there.

After the War we again went over there. The first years Pop, Mother, Kay and I usually went. Kay had never been on the ocean before except for one trip to Catalina as a girl. She was often seasick but was an exceptionally good sport. Usually after the first day she felt OK but she avoided the smell of the galley and the pilothouse. She had been in rowboats on Green Lake near Ripon Wisconsin so she enjoyed going with me in our Flint Skiff and it was fun to show her all the sights. We would sneak ashore and hike a bit. On one visit to shore at Pelican we walked up to the fig trees and saw some wild pigs in the grass. I ran back to the row boat and hurried out to the Spray to get my .22 rifle. When I got back the pigs were still there. I quickly shot 2 and then realized they were quite tiny piglets. I had just had a partial view through tall grass. We took them back to show the folks. I have a picture of Pop holding them out at arms length on each side, one in each hand. I don't think they weighed 15 pounds a piece. I took quite a ribbing over my exploit. We actually very seldom saw many pigs in those days.

During those early trips it was usual to see Shorty Larsen anchored at Orizaba in his powerboat the "Unome". Shorty was retired and seemed to live on his boat over at Santa Cruz. At the

end of our trip we usually had groceries left and we would pass them on to him. He especially appreciated the fresh fruit and vegetables. He reciprocated by advising us at times. One time the west wind was blowing right into Pelican and we weren't having much fun and he suggested running down to the "East End" and anchoring right under the cliff at Hungry Man's Gulch. It was much better. Incidentally Shorty had been given the Unome by the owner who no longer used it. This boat was mentioned in an account of a camping trip by the Sexton family in a book edited by Marla Daley. It was a fairly old boat by this time but it served Shorty well.

Shorty was indeed a shorty, a husky little Norwegian with no family that I ever heard of. He had worked hard all his life and had developed a heart problem. He seemed to be happy living by himself over there on the Unome.

As the years passed we started taking you children on the trips. We put you in life jackets and had to watch you very closely. Traveling over and back Kay would usually sit with you children right back of the pilot house. You would all get squeemish or worse if it was rough at all. I have heard that you used to get scared when the engine would begin to miss and we would have to shut it down and replace one of the igniters. However it always started up again. We had no radio but I suppose some boat would have come along. In the 25 years Pop owned the Spray it never let us down.

It was difficult for Dad to sell the Spray I am sure because we had so many fun trips on it with family and friends. As time went on it took more upkeep and it was harder for Dad to work on it and I had less time to help him. We were working very hard and the farming game wasn't very profitable. When the time came that it was required to move it into a slip he made the decision to sell her. Another factor for the decision was that it was changing shape and there is visible evidence of rot. It

needed more care. So he sold it for \$5,000—which was just twice what he paid for it. Bill Ervine and two partners bought it and started to fix it up but they soon realized it was more than they could handle so they sold it to a building contractor by the name of Blakemore. Blakemore had Sugar Lindwall really fix it up. They took out the big old Frisco Standard and put in a Caterpillar Diesel. However it only went $\frac{1}{2}$ knot faster. Also they put on 2 or 3 new planks and refastened the rest of the planking since the original iron nails had been eaten up by rust. Several ribs needed sistering. The covering board was rotted so it was replaced and I suppose the stanchions were replaced. It was in better shape than it had been for a long time but Blakemore spent a lot of money on it and still had an old boat. About 1972 he sold the Spray to a fisherman who converted it back to fishing and it operated out of Port San Louis and was still there in 2002. It is now owned by a Mr. Nevswanger who may have sold it. One or the other of the fishermen enlarged the pilot house and removed the after cabin. I saw it out of the water 5 or 6 years ago and took measurements of the hull and many pictures. The hull still looked pretty good with little evidence of hogging. The owner told me at that time that the hull was still tight. It was a great old boat; 40'L, 10'W, 6'D. It was built in 1918 in SF by a builder named Castagnola—no relative of the SB family of the same name. The original engine was a Frisco Standard of 30hp with 3 cylinders. It weighed about 4600 lbs. It had a make and break ignition system with a large coil and mechanical ignitors. It had an open crankcase with a drip oil system. Any excess oil went into the bilge and was pumped overboard. It burned about $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 gallons of gas an hour. There were originally 2-250 gallon gas tanks but one had been replaced by a 75 gal tank when Andrew Maedenough bought it. Andy was a SB builder who had the Spray converted to pleasure about 1927 by an old German shipwright who lived on her and added the teak after cabin. Incidentally Andy told Dad that

he paid \$80—a thousand board feet for that teak during the depression.

When Pop sold the Spray he intended to rent a boat to make Island trips but we only went once with Ken Opple as you should remember. Instead we went out fishing from the beachplace in the skiff and outboard. Later Jim and I bought the 14' fiberglass "Satelite" sail boat which we could sail, row, or use with an outboard motor. After Pop died I ^{bought} the 30' sloop "The Early Light" but that is another story. I may write about my recent sailboats and building the Kathryn B after I tell you some hunting stories.